

THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY

May 2012 – Week 2

Air Date: May 6 – May 12 (Sunday – Saturday)



TITLE: HEAVENS ALIGN OVER TEXAS

MAY 1878 AND THE HEAVENS ALIGN OVER TEXAS.

THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THIS STATION AND THE SAVE TEXAS HISTORY PROGRAM OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE.

MAY 6, 1878. AUSTIN. IN THIS BUSTLING CAPITAL CITY, SOMETHING UNUSUAL IS HAPPENING. SCOTTISH-BORN SCIENTIST WILLIAM HARKNESS IS HERE TO OBSERVE A RARE TRANSIT OF THE INNERMOST PLANET, MERCURY.

SETTING HIS SMALL TELESCOPE ON THE GROUNDS OF THE OLD GENERAL LAND OFFICE, HARKNESS WAITS FOR THE MORNING CLOUDS TO PART. BY NOON, THE SKY CLEARS TO REVEAL A TINY BLACK DISK MOVING ACROSS THE SUN.

USING A MICROMETER, HARKNESS GAINS VALUABLE DATA ON MERCURY'S SIZE AND ORBIT. HIS RESEARCH JOINS THAT OF SCIENTISTS AROUND THE WORLD.

THE TRANSIT OF MERCURY OCCURRED 134 YEARS AGO, THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY.

LEARN MORE AT SAVETEXASHISTORY.ORG OR CALL 800-998-4GLO.

David S. Evans, "ASTRONOMY AND ASTRONOMERS," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/soa01>), accessed May 02, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

Professional Surveyor July 2007 Volume 27 Number 7
Feature: Digging Into the Geodetic Past Frederick Czepiga, PLS
<http://www.profsurv.com/magazine/article.aspx?i=1897>

Index to the Executive Documents of the House of Representatives for the Third session of the Forty-Fifth Congress 1878-79. Volume VIII, p. 155
http://books.google.com/books?id=gp8FAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA155&1pg=PA155&dq=1878+Transit+of+Mercury+Aust+in&source=web&ots=Kivo31LnbX&sig=1PL1Z4z3_Kgj5qBhaeGcRf_9njg&hl=en#PPR4,M1

The Naval Observatory And the American Transit of Venus Expeditions of 1874 and 1882, Steven J. Dick, Chapter 7 of Sky and Ocean Joined: U.S. Naval Observatory, 1830-2000 (Cambridge University Press, 2003)
<http://books.google.as/books?id=DNwfG5hQ7-YC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

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